

Just Vindication
LEARNING:

An Humble Address to the
High Court of
PARLIAMENT
in behalf of the
House of the Bishops.

By Philip Barlow.

*Sub bono Principe sentias bona quae vultis
qua sentias dicere.*

LONDON, 1679.

W. B. Barlow

Just Vindication
OF
LEARNING:

OR,
An Humble Address to the
High Court of

PARLIAMENT

In behalf of the
Liberty of the Press.

By Philip Barrow.

And some Principles of the Liberty of the Press.
By the same Author.

LONDON, 1679.

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P R O E M.

May it please you, my Lords and Gentlemen,

THis Session of Parliament is of such high Importance to these parts of the World, that Heaven seems to have committed the Universal Fate of Christendom to Your disposal; from whose Proceedings, both France, Spain, Germany, Holland, and this part of the Universe, must take their Measures: Nor will it be a Vanity in me to affirm the same thing of You, which heretofore Tacitus did of the Battavi, 'Who in the time of the Romans (saith he) were able to confer a Victory upon whatever Party they adhered to.

The Parliaments of England have ever been Formidable to their Neighbours, but You above all others seem to have been reserv'd by Providence, for those Great and Weighty Affairs which are now in Agitation as well at home as abroad, and for which purpose You are here Convened. You only are able to cast out that Angel of Darkness, with his many Legions, who is at this time endeavouring to destroy our best of Kings and Governments: You only are able to Center this reeling Kingdom, which staggers and groans under the Plurise of Popery, and which (if not now prevented) may in time attaint and corrupt the whole mass of English Blood: You only are able to preserve that so necessary Religion, and Sacred Property of our British Isle, by continuing (as there now is) a Protestant Head, upon a Protestant Body; without

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which, our Prince would be no other than a Father-in-law to his People, and they Sons-in-law to him : besides, the incoherence would be as great and disagreeable, as to behold a black Indian Head, annex'd unto a white Body. Neither would such a conjunction be more Unnatural, than Inconvenient, since He that is arbitrary over the Soul, as in Popery, hath ever a co-equal power over the Body and the Estate ; which is evident from the examples of France, Spain, and other Popish Governments, where the Priest rides the Soul, and the Prince the Body : (a Tyranny as disagreeable to our Gracious Sovereign's Nature to impose upon us, as it would be insupportable for our English Spirits to bear.)

Now the Original of these Popish Villanies (as I humbly conceive) proceeds not more from their Sacerdotal Malice and Interest, than from their Laicks Ignorance and Servitude ; without which, their Clergy would at the best be rendred but like Wolves without Teeth. Wherefore to devest their Priests of this power of doing ill, nothing would be more conducive than the propagating of Wisdom and Knowledge amongst the populace ; since as Ignorance renders men obedient and susceptible of the meanest Slavery, so doth its contrary put all men upon their Guard : Omnes enim nos sumus, aut corvi qui lacerant, aut cadavera quæ lacerantur. Now for the more speedy effecting hereof, there hath never been discover'd any better expedient amongst men, than that of the Liberty of the Press, whereby whoever opposes the Publick-Interest, are exposed and rendred odious to the people : as on the contrary, they who merit well of their Country, are ever recorded with immortal Honour to posterity. So that if Fame and Ambition (as all generous Souls must acknowledge) have so great

great an influence over the minds of active men, what can be more reasonable, what can be more serviceable to the World, than that which hurries men into a necessity either of acting Virtuously, or of forfeiting their so-much-desired Honour for ever? and such I take to be the consequence of a Free Press. From which consideration, since the late Act which laid that severe restraint upon Printing, is so near Expiring, my humble Address to Your Lordships, and to You Gentlemen of the House of Commons, is, that before You proceed to the Continuation of any thing of that Nature, You would condescend so far as to look down upon these ensuing Arguments, against any such Inquisition or Embargo upon Science, wherein You may happily find some Reasons, which (though not founded upon private ends, like those of our Adversaries) may yet prove sufficiently satisfactory to all, but that Dead-weight of Interest which opposes us; and will not be converted, for that it is not for its Interest so to be.

This, My Lords and Gentlemen, is all from him who would Sacrifice his Life and Fortune for his King and Country, coveting no other Title of Honour whereby to be distinguished, than that of

Philopatris.

The first of these is the fact that the
 Government has not yet decided whether
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Philoparis.

A Just Vindication

OF LEARNING,

AND THE Liberty of the PRESS.

All civilized People, as well Ancient as Modern, have ever had that veneration and deference for Learning, that almost no Nation, disengaged from Barbarism, wants its publick Donations either of magnificent Structures, or plentiful Revenues, for the encouragement of Literature and Learned men. Such Patrons and Admirers of Learning were the *Heroes* of old, that they seem to contend about nothing more, than to excell in their Liberality to the *Muses*. Thus we see *Alexander the Great* presented *Aristotle* with 800 Talents; he also *Xenocrates* the Philosopher with 50 Talents; *Antiochus* likewise presented his Physician *Theombramus* with 60000 Crowns; *Homer* for his Works receiv'd a thousand pieces of Silver from the *Candiots*; nor did that suffice, but Cities must fall together by their ears for the honour of his Birth: so liberal were the Ancients to all manner of Science; nor have our Modern Benefactors been inferiour to them, as our

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two famous Universities may testify to Posterity. Yet notwithstanding all these Encouragements, Learning hath of late years met with an obstruction in many places, which suppresses it from flourishing or increasing, in spite of all its other helps, and that is, the *Inquisition upon the Press*, which prohibits any Book from coming forth without an *Imprimatur*; an old Relique of Popery, only necessary for the concealing of such defects of Government, which of right ought to be discover'd and amended. However, as our Government is not sick of the same Distemper, so need we not the same Cure, but rather the contrary: for as an ill face cannot be too closely masqued, so neither can a good one be too much exposed.

That Books are of great use to a Government, is evident, First, for that they are the only Records of Time, which excite us to imitate the past Glories of our Ancestors: 2ly. we owe our manner or form of Divine Worship to Books alone: 3ly. we owe our Philosophy, or contemplation of God in his Works, to the same cause. For mens Natural Abilities, like Natural Plants, need pruning by Study: thus we see that Histories make men wise; Poets, witty; Mathematicks, subtle; Natural Philosophy, deep; Moral Philosophy, grave; Logick and Rhetorick, able to dispute; all which Excellencies are to be acquired only from Books: since no Vocal Learning is so effectual for Instruction, as Reading; for that written discourses are better digested, and support themselves better on their own weight, than words disguised by the manner of expression, cadence or gesture, which corrupt the simplicity of things; when also the suddenness

denness of Pronunciation allow not the Audience time sufficient to reflect upon what was said. Moreover, Books flatter much less, and have more universal precepts, than Discourse; which generally affects Complaisance, and gaining the Hearers good will: Particularly in Morality, where great persons are better instructed, and more plainly reprehended for their faults by Books, than by Discourses: Books being therefore in the main so useful to Humain Society; I cannot but herein agree with Mr. *Milton*, and say, that (unless it be effected with great Caution) You had almost as good kill a Man, as a good Book; for he that kills a Man, kills but a Reasonable Creature, Gods Image: Whereas he that destroys a good Book, kills Reason it self, which is as it were the very Eye of God.

Having thus demonstrated how much the World owes to Learning and Books; let me not be altogether unmindful of *Fanst* and *Guttenburg*, the promoters of both; who by their Ingenuity discovered and made known to the World that Profound Art of Printing, which hath made Learning not only Easie, but Cheap; since now any person may accommodate himself with a good moderate Library at the same Price, as heretofore *Plato* payed for three Books of *Philolaus* the *Pythagorian*; viz. Three Hundred Pounds. This was the Invention wherewith *Cardan* upbraided the Ancients, saying, *Antiquitas nihil par habet*. Nay, *Thuanus* goes higher, when speaking of the Inventors of this Art, he saith, *Quibus plus debet Christianus orbis, quam cuiquam fortissimorum belliducum ab propagatos fines patria unquam debuit*. And

Gell. lib. 5.
ch. 17.

Subt. lib.
17.

Hist. lib.
25.

truly so we do; but still provided, that the Inquisition upon it be removed, without which, this Art design'd at first for the service of the Publick, will prove useful to none but the Licenser. Therefore in opposition to any such Restraint, I shall here demonstrate the unreasonableness of any such License or *Imprimatur*.

I. From the Ancient usage as well of the *Greeks*, as *Romans*, who were both highly Eminent for Learning; and whom in this particular we need not be ashamed to imitate: We do not find amongst the *Greeks*, that their *Vetus Comadia* (which was so much censured for Libelling and Traducing men by Name, as to be prohibited Acting on the Stage) was ever suppress'd from being read; but rather the contrary; for that *Plato* himself recommended the Reading of *Aristophanes* (the loosest of all those old Comedians) to his Royal Scholar *Dyonisius*. Neither do we read any where, that either *Epicurus* or that Libertine School of *Cyrene*, or what the *Cynick* Impudence utter'd, with many other Sects and Opinions, which tended to Voluptuousness, and the denying of a Providence, were ever prohibited or question'd. Also amongst the *Latines*, we find *Lucretius* verisifying his *Epicurean* Tenents to *Mammilius*; without any molestation, and had the honour to be published a second time by *Cicero* the great Father of the Commonwealth, although he himself disputes against that same Opinion in his own Writings. Neither do we read of any Decree against the Satyrical sharpness of *Lucilius*, *Catullus*, or *Flaccus*. Likewise in matters of State, the Story of *Titus Livius*, though it extoll'd
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and magnify'd *Pompey's* party; was not ther
 suppress'd by *Octavius Caesar* of the other Faction.
 Nay even in the times of Christianity, unless they
 were plain invectives against Christianity, as those of
Torphyrius and *Proclus*, they met with no interdict
 till about the year 400. in a *Carthaginian* Council,
 wherein Bishops themselves were forbid to read the
 Books of Gentiles, but Heresies they might read :
 Whereas others long before them, scrupled more the
 Books of Hereticks, than of Gentiles. And that the
 Primitive Councils and Bishops were used only to de-
 clare what Books were not commendable, passing no
 further censure, but leaving to each ones Conscience
 to read, or to lay by, till after the year 800. is al-
 ready observed by Father *Paul*, that great unmasker
 of the *Trentine* Council : After which time, the un-
 satiable Popes engross'd more and more every day,
 till *Martin* the 5th. by his Bull, not only prohibited,
 but was the first that Excommunicated the Reading
 of Haretical Books; For about that time, *Wicklif* and
Hufs growing formidable, were they who first drove
 the Papal Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting :
 Which Course *Leo* the 10th. and his Successors fol-
 lowed, untill the Council of *Trent* and the *Spanish*
Inquisition engendring together, produced these
 two Monsters, an *Index Expurgatorius*, and a *Licenser*,
 When they enacted, that no Book, Pamphlet, or
 Paper should be Printed, till it were Approved and
 Licens'd under the hands of two or three Gluttenous
 Fryers : So that in fine, there was never any such In-
 quisition upon Learning known in the World, till
Slavery supplanted Liberty, and Interest Religion.

2. It is the greatest Affront and Discouragement that can be offer'd to Learning and Learned men : For so far to distrust the Judgment and Honesty of one who hath but a common repute in Learning (having never yet offended) as not to count him fit to Print his mind, without a Tutor or Examiner, least he should drop a Scism or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit, that can be put upon him. What advantage is it to be a Man, over it is to be a Boy at School, if we have only 'scap'd the Ferula, to come under the Fescu of an *Imprimatur*? When a man Writes to the World, he summons up all his Reason and Deliberation to assist him ; he Searches, Meditates, is industrious in Consulting and Conferring with his Judicious Friends ; after all which, he takes himself to be inform'd in what he Writes, as well as any that writ before ; if in this the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his Abilities, can bring him to the state of Maturity, as not to be still distrusted, unless he carry all his considerate diligence, all his midnight watchings and expence of *Palladian* Oyl, to the hasty view of an *Unleasured Licenser*, perhaps much his Younger, perhaps much his Inferior in Judgment, perhaps one who never knew the Labour of Book-writing, or perhaps one altogether ignorant of that Art or Science whereof the Author Treats. When if he be not repuls'd or slighted, must appear in Print like a Puny with his Guardian, and his Censors Hand on the back of his Title, to be his Bail and Surety that he is no Idiot or Seducer : This cannot

cannot but be a derogation to the Author and to the Book, as well as to the privilege and dignity of Learning. And what if the Author shall be of so Copious a Fancy, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his Mind after Licensing, while the Book is yet under the Press, which frequently happens even to the best of Writers, and that perhaps a dozen times in one Book? The Printer dares not go beyond his Licensed Copy; so often then must the Author trudge to his Leave-giver, that those his new Insertions may be view'd; and many a Journey will he make 'ere that *Licenser*, (for it must be the same man,) can either be found, or be found at Leisure; in the mean while, either the Press must stand still, which is no small Damage, or the Author lose his most Correct Thoughts, and so send forth his Book Imperfect. How can any man esteem himself Doctor enough to Teach with Authority in his own Book, when he himself and all that he Writes, must submit to the jurisdiction and censure of another?

3. 'Tis a great prejudice even to the Book it self, to come out under the partiality and ignorant approbation of a *Licenser*: Every Acute Reader upon the first sight of a Pedantick *License*, will be apt to misinterpret the word (*Imprimatur*) and think it signifies no more, but that, this Book is foolish enough to be Printed; when seeing it comes out under the wardship of another, he will be apt to say, I know nothing of the *Licenser*, but that I have his own hand for his arrogance; who shall warrant me his Judgment? The State, Sir, replies the *Stationer*; But hath a quick return, The State shall be my Governours,
but

but not my Critics; they may be mistaken in the choice of a *Licensor*, as easily as this *Licensor* in the choice of an Author: Whereunto he might also add from my Lord Bacon, *That such Authorized Books are but the Language of the Times*. For though a *Licensor* should happen to be more then ordinary Judicious, which will be a great hazard in the next succession; yet his very Office and Commission enjoyns him to let pass nothing but what is Vulgarly received already. Nay, if the work of any Deceased Author, though never so Famous in his Life time, come to their hand for License to be Printed or Reprinted; if there be found in the Book any one Opinion that thwarts the *Licensers* Humour, whether it be of a Vacuum, Motion, Air, or never so inconsiderable a Subject; the sense of that great man shall to all Posterity be lost, out of the presumptuous Rashness of a pedantick *Licensor*. So that if these things be not seriously and timely resented by them who have the remedy in their power; but that *Licensers* are permitted to gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisite Books, and to commit such a Treacherous Fraud against the Orphan remainders of the worthiest men after death, the more sorrow will belong to that helpless race of men, whose misfortune it is to have Understanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more than worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothful, to be a common steadfast Dunce, will be the only pleasant life, and only in request.

4 It is not only a reflection upon Books and particular men, but it is likewise an undervaluing and vili-

villifying of the whole Nation: I cannot set so small value for all the Invention, the Art, the Wit, the grave and solid Judgment which is in *England*, as to imagine that it can be comprehended in any 20 Capacities, how good soever, much less that it should not pass except their Superintendence be over it, except it be sifted and strained with their Strainers, and that it should be uncurrant without their Manual Stamp: Truth and Understanding are not such Wares as to be Monopolized and Traded in Tickets, Statutes and Standards. We must not think to make a Staple Commodity of all the knowledge in the Land, to Mark and License it like our Broad-cloth and Woolpacks: What is it but a servitude, like that imposed by the *Philistines*, not to be allow'd the Sharpening of our own Axes, but we must repair from all quarters to twenty Licensing Forges? Had any one written and divulged Erroneous things, and scandalous to an Honest Life, mis-using and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason amongst men; if after conviction, this only censure were adjudged him, that he should never henceforth Write but under the Authority of an Examiner; this could not be apprehended less then a disgraceful punishment. Whence to include the whole Nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such diffident and suspicious Prohibition, renders it no less then a National disparagement; and so much the more, seeing Debtors and Delinquents may walk abroad without a Keeper, but inoffensive Books must not stir forth without a visible Jaylor in their Title: Nor is it a less reproach to the Commonalty, since, if we be jealous over them,

as that we dare not trust them with an *English* Pamphlet: What do we but censure them for a giddy, vicious, unthinking crowd; in such a sick estate of discretion, as to be able to take nothing down, but through the Pipe of a *Licensor*. Now that this proceeds from the care or love of the Commonalty, we cannot pretend; since in those Popish places where the Laity are most hated and despised, the same strictness and severity is used over them.

5. It reflects upon our Church and Clergy, of whose labours we should hope better, and of the proficiency which their Flock reaps by them; then after all this Light of the Gospel, all this continual Preaching, they should be still frequented with such an un-principled, un-edify'd and Laick rabble, as that the Whiff of every new Pamphlet should stagger them out of their Catechism and Christian walking. This may have much reason to stagger and to discourage the Ministers, when such a low conceit is had of all their Exhortations, and the benefiting of their Hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turned loose to three Sheets of Paper, without a License; that all the Sermons, all the Lectures Preached, Printed and Vented in such numbers and such Volumes, should not be Armour sufficient against one single Enchyridion Unlicensed: I am confident that a Kingdom governed by the rules of Justice and Fortitude, or a Church built and founded upon the rock of Faith and true Knowledge, cannot be so Pusillanimous. That all freedom of Writing should be thus restrained with the proud curb of an *Imprimatur*, must needs administer cause of doubt, and discouragement

ment to all Learned and Religious men, who may justly suspect the Reason and Power of that cause which durst not stand a Tryal of Skill. Every Author Writes either Truth or Falshood; If he Writes Truth, why should he be oppressed or stifled? And if he delivers what is False, let him be confuted by Answer, whereunto every Author is subject; since no cause ever suffered by being answered, only by Fire and Faggot. That Liberty is the Nursery of Science, appears in that there is nothing hath so much clouded and discouraged the *Italian* Wits, as their *Inquisition*; which restraining all manner of Philosophick freedom, hath for these many years produced nothing but obsequious flattery: In which Country the Famous *Galileo* was oppressed under the *Inquisitions* Tyranny, for thinking otherwise in Astronomy, then the *Dominican* and *Franciscan* Licensers thought.

6. This Licensing of Books is one of the most dangerous and mischeivous Monopolies and Oppressions our Government is subject to: Since, put the Case we were under an evil Prince, (as now we are under a good one) he paying this *Licenser* his Stipend, might influence him so far, as to make him License all Books against the Interest of the Subject, or to the Defamation of any publick Spirited Lords or Commoners; and to prohibit only such Books as are in the Vindication of such persons who are for the Liberty and Property of the Subject: For that 'tis ever the Interest of a *Licenser*, above all, to regard the Favour of his Prince. (though to the prejudice and almost ruine of his Country.) Who payes him his

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Wages? His Prince. Who hath the disposal of all Places and Offices of Preferment? His Prince. Then who should he study to please, right or wrong; but his Prince and Pay-master? that is, if he be such as most *Licensers* are, low-spirited men, who consider nothing but their own present Interest. Why should I not have the same freedom to write, as to speak? If I speak any thing that is evil, I am lyable to be punish'd, but yet I am never examined before I speak what I am about to say: So let not my Book be Censured by one Interested man alone, in private, till it hath tryed the publick Test; and then if there be any thing ill in it, I am ready to answer for it. Why must no Writing, either in the behalf of such great matters, as Liberty, Property, and Religion, or in the behalf of such small trades, as Funeral Tickets, Play-house Bills, City Mercuries, Hackney-Coach Bills, Quack-Doctors Bills, and the like, be Printed without a License? Is it for that the Subject of these Bills or Tickets are dangerous to the Government? or rather, that this Monopoly would be injured in its Prerogative, if the least Word or Letter be Printed without paying Toll to this *Licenser*. Heaven grant that in time, there be not the same Restraining and Monopoly over Witty Discourse, as there is now over Ingenuous Writing: Since by the same reason, the Royal Jester may demand a Spell of Money for every Jest that is broken in Discourse, as well as the *Licenser* doth expect a reward for every Ingenious Piece or Jest, that is Printed in Books: When with more Gravity than Wit, having with great Study and Labour, Corrected some such dangerous

gerous Author as *Thomas a Thumbis*; he from his Learned Grammatical Pen, which casts no Ink without *Latin*, drops forth that Lordly word *IMPRIMATUR*; either because he judged no Vulgar Tongue was worthy to express so pure a Conceit; or rather perhaps, for that our *English*, (the Language of men, ever famous and bold in the Atcheivements of Liberty,) will not easily find servile Letters enough to spell such an Arbitrary Presumptuous word, as is that of *IMPRIMATUR*.

7. This trouble of Licencing doth very much prejudice and injure the very *Licensers* themselves in the Calling of their Ministry, if they will discharge that Office as they ought; because of necessity they must neglect either the one duty or the other.

8. It robs us of that great Argument we make use of against the *Mahometans*; and what is worse, Popish Religion, *viz.* That Ignorance is the Mother of their Devotions; since how can We justly brand their Religions, for being founded meerly upon their Laicks Ignorance; when we in the like manner discountenance Knowledge our selves? How can we upbraid Papists for not daring to permit their Common people to read the Bible, when we do the same thing in effect, by tying all persons up to one mans Exposition and Interpretation of the same, *viz.* the *Licenser's*; who will not permit any Exposition to come forth that thwarts his own particular Judgment. I am confident, that if the *Turk* or the *Pope*, could be assured to make all men Expound the *Alcoran* and Scriptures according to the sense of the *Musti* and

Conclave, they would neither of them be against the Common peoples reading them ; so that we all three aim at one & the same thing, only by different ways ; and that is our mistake : For let their falsehoods use what artifice they can ; yet we do in a manner Libel our own Truth, when by Licensing and Prohibiting, fearing each Book, and the shaking of each Leaf, we distrust her own strength : Let her and Falsehood grapple ; who ever knew Truth put to the worst in a free and open Encounter ? Her confuting is the best and surest oppressing, when it leaves all standers by no room no doubt. *The punishing of Wits enhances their Authority, and forbidden Writing is thought to be a certain spark of Truth that flies up in the Faces of them who seek to tread it out.* When a man hath been working at the hardest Labour in the deep Mines of Knowledge, and hath furnished himself out in all Equipage, drawn forth his Reasons as it were in Battail-array ; scatterd and defeated all objections in his way, summons his Adversary into the Field, offers him the advantage of Wind and Sun if he pleases, only that he might try the matter by dint of Argument ; for his opponent then to Skulk & lie in Ambuscade, to keep a narrow Bridge of Licensing, where the Challenger should pass ; this, though it be courage enough in a Souldier, is but Weakness and Cowardice in the Wars of Truth. For Truth needs no Policies, no Stratagems, no Licensings to render her Victorious ; these are only the shifts and defences that Error uses against her power : So that if it once come to Prohibiting, there is nothing more likely to be Prohibited then Truth it self, even the very Bible ; as we may see

Lord
Bacon

see it is by the first Inventors of this Monopoly. To justify the Suppression of Books, some may Cite the Burning of those *Ephesian* Books by St. *Paul's* Converts; but that agrees not with our Case, for there it was not the Magistrate, but the Owners of the Books themselves who burnt them in remorse.

9. And Lastly, Give me leave to tell you, that Licensing and Persecution of Conscience are two Sisters that ever go hand in hand together, being both founded upon one and the same Principle: Therefore to Asperse the one, permit me to Defame the other. Now although I allow no indifference to those Religions whose Principles destroy Government, nor those Religions that Teach ill Life (both which Errors the Papists are guilty of.) *Yet I cannot but wish, that all men would use one another so gently and so charitably, that no violent Compulsion should introduce Hypocrisy, and render Sincerity as well troublesome as unsafe.* It would be hard measure for any man to blame that Chyrurgion who refused to cut off a mans Head only to Cure a Wart or Pimple upon his Chin or Cheek: Now the Case is altogether the same, and we may as well decree a Wart to be Mortal, as a various Opinion in *re alioqui non necessariâ* to be Capital and Damnable. I would fain know why is not any Vicious Habit as bad or worse, then a False Opinion? Why are we so zealous against those we call Non-conformists, or Hereticks, and yet at the same time dear Friends with Drunkards, Fornicators, Swearers, Intemperate and Idle Persons? I am certain that a Drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives as contrary to the Laws of Christianity as any Heretick; and I am also sure that I know what Drunkenness is, but I am not sure that such an Opinion is Heresie, nor would any man else be so dogmatical in these matters, did he not mistake confidence for certainty. Faction and Heresie were things unknown in the World, till the increase of Interest, and abatement of Christian Simplicity; when the Churches Fortune grew better, her Sons worse, and her Fathers worst of all. Why should I hate men because their Understandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the same Masters, have not met with the same the Books, nor the same Company, or have not the same

Dr. Taylor
Liberty of
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same Interest, or are not so Wise, or are much Wiser, and therefore do not determine their School-questions to the sense of my Sect or Interest? I think they are in an Error, but they believe me to be in the wrong; If they Erre, they do it not through Obstinacy, but Ignorance; and if God affords them his Patience, why should we not lend them ours? It was nobly and bravely answered (for a Heathen) of *Tamburlain* the Great; who (when his High Priest desired him to reduce all that part of the World to one Religion) replied: 'No, I will not; for that how (saith he) do I know but the same God, who hath delighted himself so much with the variety of all other things, as appears in Men, Beasts, Birds, Fish, Trees, Herbs, Flowers, &c. May not also delight himself as much in variety of Worship? Therefore I will punish none but such as deny either a God or his Providence, and him will I put to death. Certainly 'tis very unreasonable for men to press and pretend every Opinion in matters of Religion, as necessary in so high a degree, that if they spoke Truth, or indeed two of them in 500 Sects, which are now in the World (and for ought I know there may be 5000.) it is 500. to one but every man is Damn'd; for every Sect Damns all but it self, and yet that is Damn'd of 499. and it is excellent Fortune then if that escape. All Wise Princes heretofore, till they were overborn with Faction, gave Toleration to different Sects, whose Opinions did not disturb the publick Interest: And not without reason; for that being restrained and made miserable, mutually endears the discontented Parry, and so begets more hearty and dangerous Confederations against the oppressing Government.

Now how unreasonable soever such kind of Persecutions may appear to all tender hearted Christians; yet if once a License prevails (when men shall not be permitted to justify their Innocence to the World) 'tis greatly to be fear'd that these mischiefs, and worse then these (if possible) will be the consequence of it. Having therefore thus plainly and at large demonstrated the inconveniences of a Licensing Press, give me leave to write upon the square, and shew you the Ob-

Objections of our Adversaries, which without wrong to their cause, may be justly comprehended under one head, and that is this.

Objection. If (say they) a Restraint be not laid upon Printing, and some Supervisors assigned over the Press; how then can we be secured from Libells against the King, the Church, the State, and private men? As also from Popish Books of all sorts? Now this I take to be the only Material Objection, wherewith they can have any shew of a pretence to baffle and obstruct our design.

To which I *Answer*: First, that to expect any assurance that no such Books shall be written, is more then Mortal man can give; since we see that during this late Act, and should there be even a *Spanish* Inquisition erected amongst us; yet there are some Authors and some Printers so bold, that the one to vent his Humour, and the other for the Lucre of Money, would Write and Print such Books in spite of the strictest enquiry, and in defiance of the severest Penalty; And these are the Authors that are most dangerous, and also most incorrigible, being persons however that are more likely to be silenced by Liberty then by Restraint: For experience hath already shew'd, that all such Acts will prove uneffectual as to them. Secondly, supposing any such Authors are taken and discovered; why, we need no other new Laws for the punishing of them (as I humbly conceive) then what are already in force: As for example, if any Audacious Villain shall Publish Treason, he is already lyable to suffer as a Traitor; or if he Writes Scandalous Reflections upon the Government, I presume he is by the present Laws of the Land subject to a Fine and Imprisonment. Again if he publishes any Atheism, Heresie or Schism, he is lyable to an Excommunication, and to be proceeded against accordingly in the Spiritual Court: Or if in his Writing he Defames any particular person, he is obnoxious to a *Scandala Magnatum* if he be a Peer; and to an Action upon the Case for Slander, if he be a Commoner. And last of all for Popish Books, *Quere* whether there be not *Statutes* already in force for the abolishing them, made 3 and 4 of *Ed. 6.* For although this *Statute* was once

once repealed by the 1 M. 2. yet that of the 1 M. 2. was likewise afterwards repealed by the 1 Jac. 28. So that I cannot apprehend wherein we have need of any other new Law of this nature, unless it be to preserve to the poor Book-sellers their just and undoubted property of their Copies, which is their House and Land, they having the same Title for the one, as we have for the other.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING thus therefore my Lords and Gentlemen tendered to your serious consideration these few reasons against any such Inquisition upon the Press, I shall presume to offer but this one Proposal to Your Judgment, and so conclude, viz. That if these fore-mentioned Arguments prove so unnesseful, as that your Prudence shall think fit to take some further care, about the regulating of the Press; then if it be Enacted, that any Book may be Printed without a License, provided that the Printers and the Authors Name, or at least the Printers be Registered whether or no this will not have all the good, but none of the bad Consequence of a License? And that those which otherwise come forth, if they be found Mischereous and Libellous, shall be committed to the Flames, as also the Author to Condemne Punishment: but in this as in all other things I most humbly submit my self to Your Supreme Wisdom and Judicature.

P I N I S.